which can be taken only after due consultation with M/o External Affairs and Central Haj Committee. Normally, the Government plans not more than one embarkation point per State, as many States do not have even one.

Service condition of employees of AI

3093. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of permanent employees of Air India as on 1st April and 1st October 2001;

(b) the number of employees as on 1st October 2001 who were in age group 55 to 58;

(c) whether it is a 'service condition' in Air India that employees in the above age group could be laid off; and

(d) if so, how many of them were laid off in the first half of this financial year?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) The total number of permanent employees in Air India as on 01.4.2001 and 01.10.2001 were 17185 and 16927 respectively which excludes 213 staff on 2 years leave without pay and 6 officers on deputation as on 01.04.2001 and 207 staff on 2 years leave without pay and 8 officers on deputation as on 01.10.2001.

(b) There were 1302 employees in the age group of 55 to 58.

(c) No, Sir. However, Air India Employees' Service Regulations applicable to officer/executives of the company and the certified standing orders applicable to workmen provide that the Managing Director may pass an order, if deemed fit, to retire an employee compulsorily, after he/she attains the age of 55 years. The Managing Director while passing any order of the above, shall consider as to whether it is in the interest of the company or in the public interest, to retain the employee in service or require him or her to retire compulsorily.

(d) Does not arise. No employee has been compulsorily retired under the above regulations in the first half of this financial year.

Regularisation of ground staff in AA

3094. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ground staff employed in Alliance Air has not been regularised even after four years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the promotion of various categories of ground staff employees is also pending for a long time; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) to (d) The employees in Alliance Air are engaged on Fixed Term Employment Agreement basis, which are renewable. These agreements do not provide for promotions. However, fresh agreements on revised terms are entered into in accordance with the requirements of the Company and past performance of the individuals.

Clearance of encroachments around airports

3095. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Plane Truth: Soon a cow on the runway" which appeared in the Times of India dated 17th March, 2002;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the measures proposed to be adopted to clear the encroachments in the various airports in the country as highlighted in the news-item which are proving serious security hazards?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) Yes, Sir.